

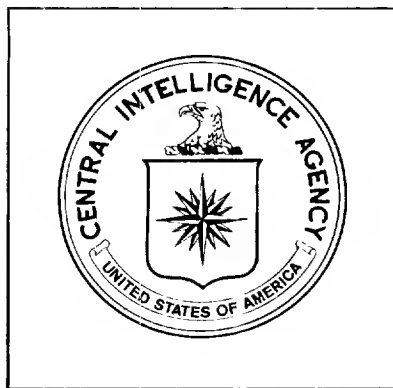
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STAFF NOTES:

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This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Soviets See Little Prospect of
Progress in Force Reduction Talks

The Soviets reportedly see little prospect of progress in the round of force reduction talks which opened last week in Vienna.

chief Soviet delegate Khlestov said he expected the talks to recess this summer without any significant agreement. Khlestov took a similar line with US representatives.

Khlestov told his East European colleagues that while he anticipated no change in either the Warsaw Pact or NATO positions, the Soviets may attempt to "get the talks moving within a week or two." This suggests that Moscow--as in past rounds--will make minor modifications in its basic proposal which calls for equal force reductions.

In his talks with US delegates, Khlestov emphasized the need to include nuclear elements in the reductions. This has been a basic component of the Soviet position from the start. Khlestov is aware, however, of a US proposal that would include nuclear weapons and delivery systems in the reduction package, and he may be seeking to smoke out Western intentions. Khlestov also seemed to back off from earlier hints that the Soviets would be willing to exchange data on forces prior to reaching agreement on "principles." There is as yet no commonly agreed data base from which both sides can discuss reductions.

Khlestov's deputy blamed the West for the stalemate at the talks. He said that "Moscow authorities" have become convinced that the West is holding back on MBFR while awaiting the outcome of CSCE and SALT. The Soviets do not want to see disputes at MBFR endanger

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their CSCE project, however, and Khlestov reportedly told his East European colleagues that it was important to keep the MBFR talks moving and to refrain from publicly offending the US. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/CONTROLLED DISSEM)



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Soviet Artists Feeling New Pressures

Soviet nonconformist artists, who up to now have benefited from the unsettled cultural atmosphere (*Staff Notes*, May 12), may soon be subjected to the same crackdown that the regime has recently been directing toward political dissidents. Police harassment of Moscow artists in connection with an outdoor show planned by their Leningrad colleagues for this weekend suggests that another confrontation with the regime may be brewing.



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The authorities in Leningrad, who are notoriously tough on ideological nonconformity, have apparently not yet responded to the artists' application to hold the exhibit. Although there have been no reports of harassment in Leningrad, the events in Moscow bode ill for the Leningraders' chances for holding the show.

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The regime's threats against the artists coincide with a harsh article in the May 17 issue of the Moscow party daily, *Moskovskaya Pravda*. The article attacks the "avantguardists" for the "anti-social, anti-human, and anti-Marxist" content of their art, and castigates their exhibits as inimical to the continued "struggle of two ideologies, communist and

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bourgeois." The artists themselves are depicted as "charlatans" playing into the hands of Western propagandists. As proof, the article cites the support given the nonconformists by Western diplomats and journalists.

The artists have been subjected to threats and sneers in the press before--and in more weighty publications than *Moskovskaya Pravda*--but the focus of the current article on the ideological implications of the artists' activity is ominous. The article rejects any middle ground between the Marxist and "bourgeois" approaches to art, declaring that exhibits which promote "hostile ideology" are not "necessary."

These developments do not necessarily mean that a new and uncompromising cultural policy is emerging from the flux of recent months. They do suggest, however, that the regime has decided to curb the nonconformists' exploitation of policy drift to enlarge their own area of maneuver. The regime may feel that because of Western preoccupation with other problems, it can crack down on the artists--as it is doing on political dissenters--without too much damage to the Soviet image abroad.

The current scare tactics may also be designed to encourage the long-existing split between those artists who advocate firm resistance to all regime pressure and those who favor patience and compromise. The split itself raises the possibility, however, that the intransigents may go it alone, and that a test of wills could occur in Leningrad as early as next week. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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Romania - Southeast Asia

The news media in Bucharest have been restrained in their comments on US reverses in Southeast Asia, and the US embassy reports that Romanian officials are reluctant to discuss the situation at all.

The Romanians apparently reason that one bone of contention with Washington has been buried and that gloating would be inappropriate--particularly with the trade bill pending in Congress. Bucharest has frequently commented that the US is now free to engage itself more constructively and should take a fresh look at its strategy and tactics toward the entire underdeveloped world. The Romanian officials argue that if Washington couples such an outlook to its powerful economy, the US should be able to adjust itself to the emerging "new world economic and political order."

Unlike these officials, some Romanian intellectuals have viewed the situation pessimistically. A number say the balance of world power has shifted seriously against the US in favor of more radical forces. Many buy the domino theory one hundred percent, and some even use the epithet "Munich" to describe recent events in Indochina. Other intellectuals harbor the conviction that Communist regimes seem to be more durable than even the powerful democracies. As a result, these liberals reportedly believe that domestic dogmatists throughout East Europe have been strengthened.

Romanian officials are always keenly concerned with the "world balance of forces," because Bucharest tailors its independent national Communist course to "friendship with everyone." The privately voiced

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comments of Romanian officialdom are meant to establish closer ties between Washington and Bucharest. Romanian authorities and intellectuals share the anxiety that a weakened US would be less able to counter effectively any increased Soviet pressure on Romania. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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Soviet-Uruguayan Fishing Talks Founder

A Soviet fishing delegation was in Uruguay last week, but failed to conclude a joint fishing agreement.

The talks ended with the two sides far apart. Uruguay has decided on a fishing industry made up of small ships using processing facilities ashore; the Soviets wanted a joint venture using large factory ships.

Uruguay also insisted that the two sides share in all aspects of the venture; the Soviets offered only to supply the ships, leaving investment ashore to the Uruguayans.

The eastern waters off Latin America are one of the few fishing areas in the world in which the Soviet fishing fleet is not very active. Uruguay earlier refused to say the Soviets could fish within the country's claimed 200-mile territorial sea; Moscow has honored this claim and similar ones by other Latin American countries. Moscow sees joint ventures as its best hope in such cases.
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